

EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CLIL FOR YOUNG ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Abstract. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an educational approach that integrates the teaching of subject content with the learning of a foreign or additional language. In recent years, CLIL has attracted increasing attention as an effective approach that enables learners to develop their subject-specific knowledge while providing meaningful opportunities to use English in authentic and purposeful contexts. This article examines the effectiveness of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as an integrated approach to teaching subject content and language to young learners of English.

Keywords: communication, competence, intercultural competence, component, independent thinking, skills, modern innovations, integration.

YOSH INGLIZ TILI O'RGANUVCHILARI UCHUN CLIL (FAN VA TILNI INTEGRATSIYALASHGAN HOLDA O'QITISH) SAMARADORLIGINI O'RGANISH

Annotatsiya. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) - fan mazmunini o'qitishni chet yoki qo'shimcha tilni o'rganish bilan integratsiya qiladigan yondashuvdir. So'nggi yillarda CLIL o'quvchilarga fan bo'yicha bilimlarini rivojlantirish bilan birga ingliz tilidan mazmunli foydalanish imkoniyatini beruvchi yondashuv sifatida tobora ko'proq e'tibor qozonmoqda. Mazkur maqolada yosh ingliz tili o'rganuvchilari uchun Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) - fan va tilni integratsiyalashgan holda o'qitish yondashuvining samaradorligi tahlil qilinadi.

Kalit so'zlar: kommunikatsiya, kompetensiya, madaniyatlararo, komponent, mustaqil fikrlashi, ko'nikma, zamonaviy innovatsiyalar, integratsiya.

ИЗУЧЕНИЕ ЭФФЕКТИВНОСТИ CLIL (ПРЕДМЕТНО-ЯЗЫКОВОГО ИНТЕГРИРОВАННОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ) ДЛЯ ЮНЫХ ИЗУЧАЮЩИХ АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК

Аннотация. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) представляет собой образовательный подход, интегрирующий обучение предметному содержанию с изучением иностранного или дополнительного языка. В последние годы CLIL приобретает всё большее внимание как эффективный подход, позволяющий учащимся развивать предметные знания и одновременно получать возможности для содержательного и целенаправленного использования английского языка в аутентичных коммуникативных ситуациях. В данной статье анализируется эффективность Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) как интегрированного подхода к обучению предметному содержанию и английскому языку учащихся младшего возраста.

Ключевые слова: коммуникация, компетенция, межкультурная компетенция, компонент, самостоятельное мышление, навыки, современные инновации, интеграция.

Introduction. In the context of contemporary globalization and international communication, the effective teaching of English from an early age has become one of the key priorities of the education system. While in traditional foreign language instruction, the language is often taught as a separate subject, modern pedagogical approaches place considerable emphasis on integrating language learning with authentic content and meaningful activities. One such approach is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which refers to an instructional methodology that integrates subject content and language learning.

Within the CLIL approach, learners acquire English not merely through the acquisition of grammatical rules or vocabulary items, but also by studying content related to subjects such as mathematics, natural sciences, geography, and art in English. As emphasized by Mehisto, Marsh, and Frigols (2008), this approach aims not only to develop learners' language competencies but also to foster the acquisition of knowledge and skills within a particular subject area. By using language as a means of acquiring subject-specific content rather than treating it solely as a separate academic subject, the CLIL approach integrates the processes of language learning and subject-matter knowledge acquisition

[5].

CLIL is of particular pedagogical significance for young learners of English, as it provides them with opportunities to acquire the language in a more natural way through contextualized learning, visual materials, hands-on activities, and communication. The implementation of CLIL with young learners requires careful consideration of a range of factors, including their language proficiency, cognitive development, teachers' methodological preparedness, and the appropriateness of instructional materials.

The CLIL approach conceptualizes a foreign language not as an independent educational objective, but as an effective pedagogical tool that facilitates the process of acquiring specific subject content. In addition to developing learners' communicative competence in a foreign language, this approach enables them to develop subject-specific knowledge, skills, and abilities in an integrated manner. The CLIL model contributes to the development of learners' interdisciplinary thinking, broadens their global outlook, and fosters the competencies required for effective participation in multilingual and intercultural communicative environments. This approach creates significant pedagogical opportunities for developing competent individuals who meet the demands of contemporary education, are capable of independent and critical thinking, possess multilingual competence, and can communicate effectively across diverse cultural contexts.

The concept of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) developed extensively within the European education system during the 1990s, with its fundamental principle being the simultaneous teaching of subject content and a foreign language. In this regard, Europe can be regarded as a distinctive "testing ground" for the implementation of CLIL. In many countries, CLIL has become an integral component of national education policy, with subjects being taught in English, French, German, or Spanish in schools. This approach provides learners with opportunities to acquire a foreign language in a natural and meaningful context.

Similar developments in CLIL implementation can also be observed in Latin America, China, Southeast Asia, and other regions. CLIL programs in Latin America aim to enhance learners' access to global knowledge in science and technology through English, whereas in China, the CLIL approach is closely associated with the country's transition toward a "knowledge economy." Within such programs, English is regarded not merely as a means of communication, but also as a key to accessing and acquiring contemporary innovations.

The defining feature of CLIL is the integrated teaching of language and subject content rather than treating them as separate components. Within this approach, English serves simultaneously as both an educational objective and a means of acquiring subject-specific content. For example, when primary school learners study the topic "Animals", they acquire knowledge about animals' habitats, diets, and characteristics while simultaneously learning relevant English words and expressions. CLIL is generally conceptualized through four key components: Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture.

One of the most widely recognized theoretical models of CLIL is Coyle's 4Cs framework, which is based on the integration of the four components: Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture. According to this model, an effective CLIL lesson involves more than simply explaining a subject topic in English. It should provide learners with opportunities to acquire subject content, communicate through the target language, engage in both lower- and higher-order cognitive processes, and develop an understanding of the relevant cultural context.

Content contributes to the development of learners' subject-specific knowledge. It refers to the knowledge, concepts, and skills that learners are expected to acquire within a particular subject area. For example, in a natural science lesson, learners may study the parts of a plant, their functions, or the basic principles of photosynthesis.

Communication refers to learners' ability to understand and express subject content in English. This component facilitates the practical use of English. In this context, language is not merely an object of learning but becomes a means of acquiring and communicating knowledge.

Cognition refers to learners' thinking processes. In CLIL lessons, learners are not limited to memorizing information; rather, they engage in activities such as comparing, classifying, identifying causes, analyzing, evaluating, and creating new products. The cognitive component encourages learners to analyze information, make comparisons, solve problems, and draw conclusions.

Culture contributes to learners' understanding of the sociocultural dimensions of language, subject knowledge, and learning. From this perspective, CLIL is not merely an integration of language and subject content, but also a pedagogical model that provides opportunities to develop learners' multicultural perspectives. The cultural component, in turn, broadens learners' understanding and awareness of different cultures.

CLIL differs from conventional English language instruction. Learners use the language not only as an "object of learning" but also as a means of performing specific tasks. This, in turn, enhances the functional and communicative dimensions of language use. The process of language acquisition among young learners differs considerably from that of adults. Children often acquire a new language through direct communication, repetition, physical movement, play, visual representations, and realia. CLIL provides an effective framework for making purposeful use of these characteristics in the language learning process.

The CLIL approach offers effective pedagogical opportunities for developing learners' lexical competence and systematically expanding their vocabulary. Within this approach, new lexical items are not acquired as isolated lists of words, but rather in natural and meaningful contexts that are closely integrated with the content and subject matter of a particular topic. For example, when studying the topic "Plants," lexical items such as root, stem, leaf, and flower are used in

practice through activities involving the observation of real plants, identification of their structural components, and description of their characteristics.

Such a contextualized approach enables learners not only to understand the lexical meanings of new words but also to establish semantic associations between these words and the corresponding objects, phenomena, and processes. As a result, newly acquired lexical items are more likely to be consolidated in long-term memory, while learners' ability to use them actively in subsequent communicative and academic activities is enhanced.

The CLIL approach creates effective pedagogical conditions for developing learners' communicative competence. Within this approach, learners use English purposefully and functionally through activities such as answering questions, engaging in group collaboration, explaining experimental results, describing particular phenomena and processes, and interpreting visual materials. Such tasks ensure that learners do not merely acquire language forms from a theoretical perspective, but also apply them in real or near-real communicative situations.

As a result, learners progressively develop a range of communicative skills, including expressing their ideas independently in English, actively participating in question-and-answer interactions, supporting and justifying their opinions, and engaging in collaborative communication.

The CLIL approach is considered one of the effective means of developing and fostering learners' communicative competence. In the educational process organized within this approach, learners use English purposefully and functionally through a variety of communicative activities, including answering questions, participating in group work, analyzing and interpreting experimental results, and describing visual materials. In this process, language is not presented merely as learning material, but rather as a means of acquiring knowledge, exchanging ideas, and expressing one's point of view. As a result of such activities, learners develop the ability to use English in authentic communicative situations, express their ideas independently, actively participate in question-and-answer interactions, and engage in communication based on mutual collaboration.

CLIL can contribute to increasing learners' motivation to learn. For young learners, an exclusive focus on grammar exercises or vocabulary memorization may lead to monotony. Integrating subject content into lessons, however, expands opportunities to incorporate experiments, projects, games, observation, and problem-solving tasks. When learners use English to complete an engaging and meaningful task, they gain a clearer understanding of the practical purpose of learning the language.

The CLIL approach also creates effective pedagogical opportunities for supporting learners' cognitive development and fostering higher-order thinking skills. Within this approach, learners not only acquire new lexical items but also engage in cognitive activities such as classifying information, comparing objects and phenomena, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, analyzing problematic situations, and justifying their ideas on the basis of evidence. For example, in a natural science lesson, while seeking an answer to the question "Why do plants need sunlight?", learners simultaneously acquire scientific concepts related to the life processes of plants and use linguistic resources in English to express cause-and-effect relationships. Thus, the CLIL approach not only promotes the integrated development of language competence and subject-specific knowledge but also contributes to the systematic development of learners' analytical, logical, and critical thinking skills.

The effectiveness of CLIL does not occur automatically. Its outcomes depend on a number of pedagogical conditions. One of the most important factors ensuring the effectiveness of the CLIL approach is the development of instructional materials that are appropriate to learners' age-related characteristics, cognitive abilities, and level of language competence. The use of academic language and terminology that is excessively complex in relation to learners' linguistic preparedness may significantly hinder not only their understanding of the language material but also their comprehension of the subject content being studied.

Therefore, when designing CLIL lessons, teachers should consistently employ pedagogical tools such as visual materials, gestures, diagrams and graphic organizers, simple syntactic structures, model sentences, and purposeful repetition. These tools enable learners to comprehend complex subject content, acquire new linguistic units in context, and apply them in practical activities. As a result, learners' cognitive and linguistic loads can be balanced, thereby creating favorable pedagogical conditions for the parallel development of subject-specific knowledge and language competence.

The second important factor is scaffolding, that is, a strategy involving the provision of gradual linguistic and content-related support to learners at different stages of the educational process. This strategy is based on providing learners with an appropriate level of guidance and assistance to enable them to acquire new knowledge and skills independently. For example, when introducing a new topic, the teacher may initially present key and essential lexical items, use model sentences and structures, support comprehension of the content through visual materials, and subsequently guide learners toward expressing their own ideas and drawing conclusions independently. Such gradual pedagogical support helps regulate learners' cognitive load, facilitate the comprehension of complex content, and progressively increase their ability to use English independently.

The third important factor is teachers' professional competence. Effective implementation of the CLIL approach requires teachers not only to possess a strong command of English but also to have the ability to explain relevant subject content in a pedagogically effective manner, identify learners' linguistic needs, and ensure the integration of language and content throughout the educational process. From this perspective, the professional competence of a CLIL teacher is based on the integration of two principal components: subject-specific knowledge and linguistic-pedagogical competence. The integration of these competencies constitutes one of the essential pedagogical conditions for enabling learners to

effectively acquire subject content through English while simultaneously developing their language skills within meaningful and content-rich contexts.

The fourth factor is the assessment system. In CLIL lessons, assessment should not be limited to learners' grammatical accuracy; it should also take into account their understanding of subject content and their ability to use the language to perform communicative tasks. Therefore, formative assessment, observation, project work, oral presentations, and portfolios can serve as effective assessment tools.

The main advantage of CLIL lies in its ability to connect language learning with meaningful activities. Learners use English not merely for examinations or grades, but also as a means of acquiring new knowledge and communicating with others. Furthermore, integrated learning can contribute to the development of learners' independent thinking, collaborative skills, and problem-solving abilities.

In conclusion, CLIL is a promising pedagogical approach that enables young learners of English to acquire the language within meaningful and communicative contexts. Its primary strength lies in the integration of language and subject content. Through CLIL, learners' vocabulary, communicative competence, motivation, and cognitive engagement can be developed. However, the success of CLIL depends not simply on incorporating it into classroom instruction, but on careful methodological planning. Taking into account young learners' cognitive and linguistic capacities, employing visual aids, implementing appropriate scaffolding strategies, providing specialized teacher training, and developing suitable assessment criteria are essential conditions for enhancing the effectiveness of CLIL.

It is therefore appropriate to view CLIL not as an isolated method for teaching English to young learners, but as a comprehensive approach that integrates content, language, cognitive development, and communication within a unified educational process. To evaluate its effectiveness more reliably, further long-term empirical research should be conducted across different age groups, educational settings, and levels of language proficiency.

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